

# **Lisbon, Portugal: 2006 Crime and Safety Report**

## **CRIME AND SAFETY**

Europe - Portugal

1 Jan 2006

### **Overall Crime and Safety Situation**

Lisbon is currently designated a low threat crime post. In general, Portugal has a relatively minimal amount of street crime. Violent criminal confrontations and the use of weapons are rare, but such incidents are rising in frequency. The level of gang activity, while low, is increasing with 50 percent of murders in Lisbon attributed to gang violence. Burglars and pickpockets are active and crimes of opportunity are common. Eastern European organized crime groups are present in Portugal, but mainly target the Eastern European immigrant population. Anti-American sentiment is low to moderate with peaceful demonstrations against American involvement in Iraq occurring in 2003 and 2004. Smaller peaceful demonstrations also occurred at the Consulate in Ponta Delgada, Consular Agency Funchal and the Foreign Commercial Office in Oporto.

### **Political Violence**

At this time, there are no specific or credible threats of violent demonstrations, war, civil unrest, or terrorist acts that would affect visitors to Portugal. Due to the worldwide threat environment it is important that common sense security precautions be taken at all times, such as varying routes and times of activities. Well-publicized general strikes and protests by public sector unions take place regularly and are inconvenient, but they are usually not violent.

### **Post-Specific Concerns**

The threat of earthquakes tops the list of post-specific concerns. In 1755, an earthquake and associated tsunami destroyed much of Lisbon and killed an estimated 30,000 people. Additionally, the Spanish Flu killed an estimated 60,000 people in Portugal in 1918. Although the present risk of an outbreak is low, the Government of Portugal continues to take steps to plan for Avian Influenza.

### **Police Response**

The police and security forces are progressing steadily in their preparedness and response capability. The numbers of police, the quality of training, and the quality of communication systems also are improving. However, the police presence in rural areas is sparse and communicating in English may be difficult. The police are eager to assist and are making efforts to improve their professionalism.

### **Medical Emergencies**

The national emergency response telephone number is 112 for police, fire and medical help. This service is similar to America's 911 emergency response telephone number and may be called from all telephones, including cellular phones for police, fire, and medical emergencies. English speaking operators are available to assist foreigners. In the event of a medical emergency, say "tenho uma emergencia medica." Routine and non-emergency medical referral assistance may be obtained through a hotel concierge or by calling one of the English speaking or international clinics listed in the phone book.

British Hospital: 351-21-395-5067

Clinica Medica International de Cascais: 351-21-484-5317

Hospital Santa Maria (Trauma ER): 351-21-780-5000

Hospital Sao Francisco Xavier (Trauma ER): 351-21-300-0300

Poison Control: 351-21-795-0143

Civil Protection: 351-21-416-5100

### **Tips to Avoid Becoming a Victim**

Since crimes of opportunity are common, visitors are encouraged to safeguard their valuables and not carry large amounts of cash or unneeded credit cards and ATM cards. Be wary of pickpockets and purse-snatchers, especially on crowded streets in entertainment areas, department stores, restaurants or crowded public transit. Car crime, such as auto thefts and thefts from vehicles, is low but slowly growing. Do not leave anything of value in plain view within any vehicle. Driving defensively is encouraged and, as a reminder, all vehicle doors should be locked and windows closed. The number of reported carjackings is dramatically lower than in previous years because of a

concerted police program to combat carjackings. Additionally, a carjacking is more likely to occur between the hours of 1 and 2 a.m. at stoplights. Regarding hotels, visitors are warned not to leave valuables in hotel rooms, unless locked in a safe, regardless of the stature of the hotel.

**For further information**

THE U.S. EMBASSY IN LISBON

351-21-727-3300

Regional Security Officer 351-21-770-2546

Consular Section 351-21-770-2400

Foreign Commercial Service 351-21-770-2526

Consulate Ponta Delgada (Azores) 351-29-628-2216

Consular Agency Funchal (Madeira) 351-29-123-5636

Foreign Commercial Service (Oporto) 351-22-618-6607U.S.

Embassy Lisbon Website: <http://lisbon.usembassy.gov/>